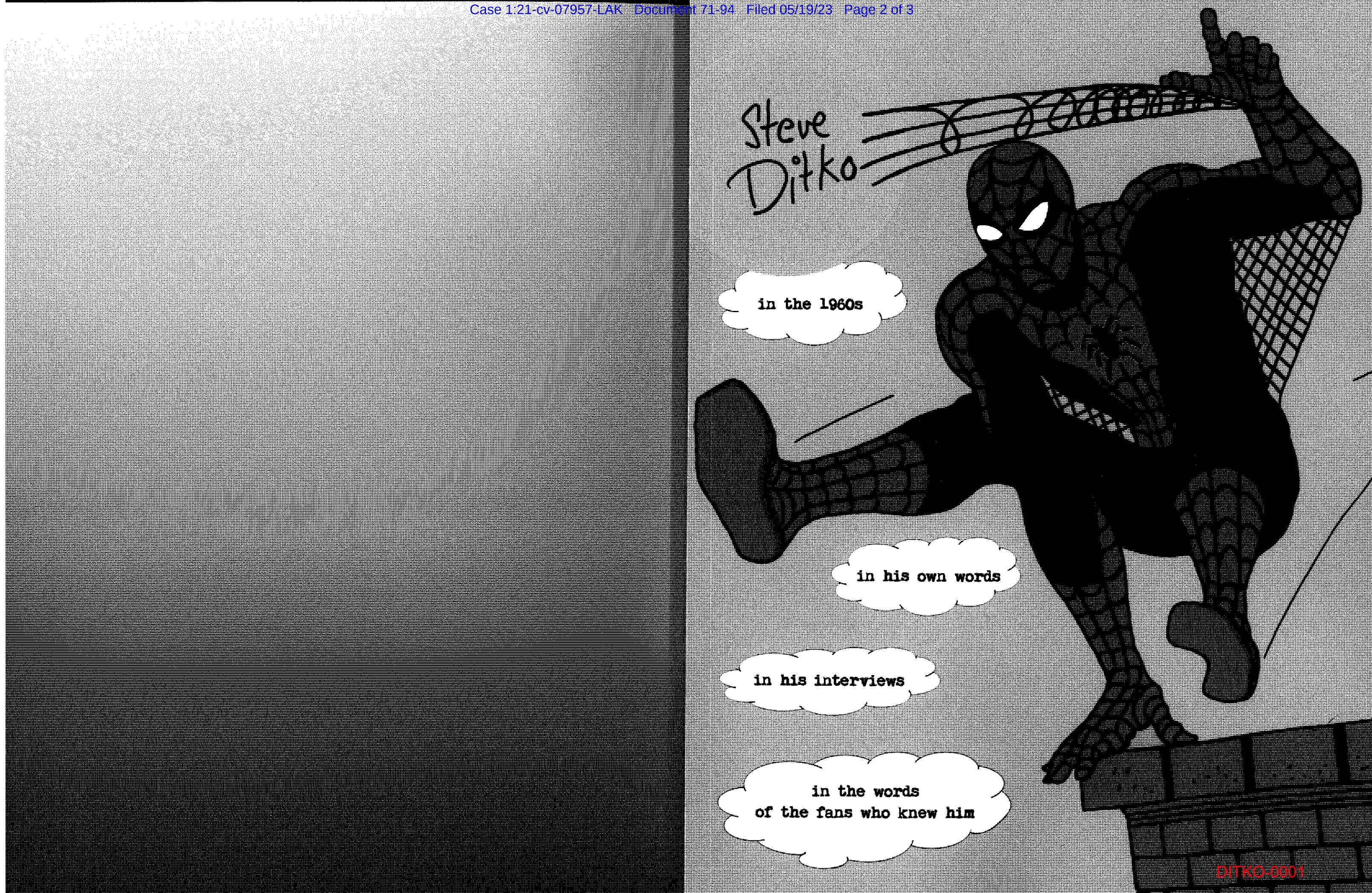


EXHIBIT 73



DITKO-0001

From RBCC #31 (June 1964): This is the first interview with Steve Ditko ever conducted. If that isn't amazing enough, it is even more amazing that the interview took place over a year before it actually appeared in print. So there is absolutely no contest over "who was first" to interview the artist. For the astonishing story behind how this interview came about, read Bernie Bubnis's account "Steve Ditko and Memories of Another Day" in the pages that directly follow this interview. Of interest is that Steve Ditko did not want his words to appear as an interview, *per se*, so Bernie instead converted the interview into article format. But anyone who reads this "article" can see that it is clearly an interview. Of note also is Bernie's use of the word "Marvelmania," and it may be the earliest-known coinage of that now-widely-used word. This article appeared fifth in a series of interviews Bernie personally conducted with comic book professionals that were published in the *The Rocket's Blast / Rocket's Blast Comicollector*. The first four were with Joe Giella (*The Rocket's Blast* #24, November 1963), Mike Sekowsky (*The Rocket's Blast* #27, February 1964), Julius Schwartz (RBCC #29, April 1964), Marvel Secretary Flo Steinberg and Gold Key Editor Bill Harris (both in RBCC #30, May 1964).

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PROS: NUMBER 5
THIS ISSUE: STEVE DITKO
by Bernie Bubnis

The mystery surrounding Steve Ditko is about as thick as some of the fog he conjures up in his stories. At least, this was my observation of him before I managed to snag an appointment with him. Steve arose from obscurity to the artist of Marvel's best bread winner, *SPIDER-MAN*.

As I entered his private studio I first noticed a maze of shelves all over the wall to the right. A book on spiders caught my eye, so I promptly questioned him as to if this was any help in his present assignments. He chuckled and said, "H___ no!" It seems the shelves were filled to the brim with a complete collection of Steve's past efforts in the art field. The complexity of his studio, with erasure shavings spread around, made me wonder as to the time element in the artist's life. He told me he works "from 9 in the morning...until I get tired."

Let's go back to the beginning. In 1950, Steve left his home in Johnstown, Pa., chiefly to enter the comic book field. He enrolled at the Cartoonist and Illustrators School and was greatly influenced in his work by instructor Jerry Robinson.

As most new artists do, Ditko trekked back and forth from one company to another, trying to land a job. Finally, in 1955, the big chance came. He pinpoints "Stretching Things" in *FANTASTIC FEARS* (Vol. 1, no. 5) as his very first stint in comics.

He confesses, however, that it was the Charlton people who gave him his first real chance. I speculated on the fannish idea that maybe Charlton would soon fold, but Steve shot back a startling rebuttal. "Why with their own presses they can produce a comic book for almost nothing... and still make money. They've got it made..."

Up until now everyone has been under the impression that there was only one copy of the Kirby 3-Der, *CAPTAIN 3-D*. Steve offers a new beam of light on this for all the Kirby completists in the audience. He definitely did the inking on the first 3 *CAPTAIN 3-Ds* (along with about 6 other artists, including Mort Meskin). I quickly pointed out that there was only one copy issued. Steve refers to the fact that the 3-D fad came and went in a flash so the last two issues might have been docked before they were released.

Bringing up *Marvelmania*, I learned that he disliked doing the old 5-pagers for Lee's pre-super hero monster comics. Although I was pre-assured of the answer, I asked him if he would want to work for another company. He grinned sternly and said merely, "No, never..."

The topic shifted to the lessening quality of Kirby artwork. Ditko pointed out that Jack was a real master of speed, and he needed it to keep up with the assignments Lee was throwing at him. "It stands to reason that Jack's work tends to look hurried, because it is! Anyone who is that buried under work will surely not take the extra time necessary to make it perfect. Jack's a real genius."

I happen to think that artists have heroes of their own, so with this in mind, I asked Steve who his favorite artist is, one that was working for another company. He replied, to my surprise, that it was Mort Meskin. At this point I noticed a fanzine dangling limply from one of his folders. He says he enjoys all fanzines, but enjoys the articles on old super heroes the most. The fanzine in question was a copy of Bronson's zine, *BULLSEYE*, with a marker at the Johnny Quick article.

Steve Ditko provided me with information for about ten other articles on him, but I prefer to release these as the urge to revive the Ditko fad strikes me.

Steve is comparatively recent to the field and he went way out of his way to help me get all the facts I needed for this article. I try to end all my *Spotlight* articles with a clever saying of some sort to show that the particular pro I'm writing about is a nice guy. Well, no fancy sayings this time, only the bare facts. Steve Ditko is a nice guy, thank the Lord he's one of us.

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Bernie's interview with Steve Ditko took place in 1963, and for this book he was kind enough to look back on those early days to provide some historical context about the circumstances that made this interview possible. A shorter version of Bernie's story appeared in *Alter Ego* #160 (September 2019) and another part was published in *The 1964 New York Comicon: The True Story Behind the World's First Comic Convention* (2016). The version of his account told here in "Steve Ditko and Memories of Another Day" presents for the first time the full history of Bernie's numerous visits with Steve Ditko.